Case 2850

Phyllophis carinata Günther, 1864 (currently *Elaphe carinata*; Reptilia, Serpentes): proposed conservation of the specific name

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is to conserve the specific name of *Phyllophis carinata* Günther, 1864, which has had long usage in an extensive literature, for a snake occurring in southeastern China, northern Vietnam, Taiwan and southern Japan (Ryukyus). For a very short time (March — October 1891) the species was considered to be congeneric with the Central and South American snake *Coluber carinatus* Linnaeus, 1758, rendering Günther's name a junior secondary homonym. *Coluber phyllophis* Boulenger, 1891 was established as a replacement for *C. carinatus* (Günther, 1864) and the latter is thus formally permanently invalid. However, the name *phyllophis* has rarely been used and has not appeared at all since 1929.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Reptilia; Serpentes; snakes; *Elaphe carinata*; China, Japan.

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1. Linnaeus (1758, p. 223) described the Central and South American species of snake *Coluber carinatus*. He referred to the account of the species (1754, p. 31) based on material in the collections described in his *Museum Adolphi Friderici*. Andersson (1899, p. 17) listed and gave measurements for a specimen of *C. carinatus* in the Linnaean collection in the Stockholm museum; this specimen still exists. The species was transferred to the genus *Herpetodryas* Wagler, 1830 by Boulenger ([1 October] 1891, p. 355; ref. 1891b; see Duncan, 1937 for the publication dates of the 1859–1926 volumes of the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London*). *C. carinata* has been included in *Chironius* Fitzinger, 1826 since Ruthven's (1922) work appeared.

2. Günther (1864, p. 295, pl. 21, fig. B) described *Phyllophis carinata* as a new genus and species of snake 'said to be from China', based on a specimen in the collections of the Natural History Museum, London (catalogue no. BM(NH) 1946.1.14.58). A second specimen (Günther, 1888, p. 170) from the mountains north

of Kiu Kiang (now Jiujiang Shi, Jiangxi Province) confirmed the origin. In March 1891 Boulenger (p. 281; ref. 1891a) transferred Günther's taxon to the genus *Coluber* Linnaeus, 1758, thereby rendering *C. carinatus* (Günther, 1864) a junior secondary homonym of *C. carinatus* Linnaeus, 1758. Boulenger noted: 'I am compelled to propose a new specific name for this snake, the name *Coluber carinata* [recte *carinatus*] being preoccupied'; he established the replacement name *Coluber phyllophis*. Boulenger redescribed the taxon and referred to 'several specimens' from China; these included an adult specimen described by Günther (1858) as *Elaphis sauromates* Pallas and a young specimen (the holotype) of *Phyllophis carinata* Günther.

3. Günther's (1864) specific name *carinata* was replaced as a junior secondary homonym before 1961 and is therefore permanently invalid (Article 59b of the Code). The valid specific name for the taxon is *phyllophis* Boulenger, 1891 and this was adopted, in combination with *Coluber*, by Müller (1892), Boulenger (1894) and Günther (1896).

4. Stejneger (1898, p. 221) adopted the name *Elaphe* Fitzinger, 1833 and reintroduced the specific name *carinata* Günther, 1864 for the single species he placed in the genus. Stejneger (1907, 1910) assigned further species, formerly placed in *Coluber*, to *Elaphe* and cited (1907, p. 308) *phyllophis* as a junior synonym of *carinata*. A few authors (Wall, 1903; Werner, 1903, 1924, 1929; Stanley, 1915; Steindachner, 1913; Mell, 1922; and Vogt, 1922, 1927) continued to use *phyllophis* Boulenger, 1891 in combination with *Coluber*. Stejneger did not comment on his choice of specific name but Steindachner (1914, p. 337) noted that Stejneger's adoption of *Elaphe* Fitzinger, rather than *Coluber*, for *Phyllophis carinata* Günther meant that there was no homonymy with *Coluber carinatus* Linnaeus and that Günther's specific name could be retained.

5. The combination *Elaphe carinata* (Günther, 1864) has been used for the taxon by most authors since 1907, and without exception since 1929. The more significant recent publications include Pope (1935), Bourret (1936), Smith (1943), Wang & Wang (1956), Coburn (1991), Ota (1991) and Zhao & Adler (1993). The Commission Secretariat holds a list of over 60 further works dating from 1910 to 1991 (45 of which are later than 1945) demonstrating the usage of *Elaphe carinata*. This list could be expanded but suffice it to say that (1) it already far exceeds the minimum required by Article 79c for the usage of the name over the past 50 years (by five different authors in ten publications); (2) many of the works cited are major reviews of broad influence, and some are popular works with wide circulation; (3) in addition to the nominotypical form three subspecies of *E. carinata*, generally recognized as valid, have been described: *E. c. ornithophaga* Bourret, 1936, *E. c. yonaguniensis* Takara, 1962 and *E. c. deqenensis* Yang & Su, 1984. This last subspecies was referred to (twice) as *deqenensis* in the Chinese text of Yang & Su's paper (p. 160), but appeared (twice) as *deqinensis* in the English summary (p. 163). The locality for the type material (now housed in the Kunming Institute of Zoology) was given (a number of times) as Deqin Xian (now Deqen Xian, Yunnan Province). Acting as first revisers we here select *deqenensis* as the definitive spelling. This spelling was adopted by Zhao & Adler (1993, p. 236) but they did not meet the requirements of Article 24 for first reviser selection.

6. We conclude that the resurrection of Boulenger's (1891) replacement specific name *phyllophis*, as would be required by application of the automatic provisions of

the Code, would be severely disruptive to nomenclatural stability, and that a prima facie case has been made for the maintenance of *Elaphe carinata* (Günther, 1864). We make this application under Articles 59b(i) and 79a.

7. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

(1) to use its plenary powers to rule that the specific name *carinata* Günther, 1864, as published in the binomen *Phyllophis carinata*, is not invalid by reason of having been replaced before 1961 as a junior secondary homonym of *Coluber carinatus* Linnaeus, 1758;

(2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *carinata* Günther, 1864, as published in the binomen *Phyllophis carinata* (not invalid by reason of having been replaced before 1961 as a junior secondary homonym of *Coluber carinatus* Linnaeus, 1758);

(3) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology the name *phyllophis* Boulenger, 1891, as published in the binomen *Coluber phyllophis* (a junior objective synonym of *Phyllophis carinata* Günther, 1864).

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